



News Release

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

The Idaho Water Center, 322 E. Front St., Boise, ID - TEL: (208) 287-4800 FAX: (208) 287-6700

www.idwr.idaho.gov

Release 2005-37

Order Issued in Response to Surface Water Coalition Water Call

For Immediate Release
Boise, Idaho - April 20, 2005

For Media Information Contact:
Michael Keckler – (208) 287-4828

Idaho Department of Water Resources Director Karl Dreher late yesterday issued an order that affects use of ground water for irrigation of 80,810 acres of land in Water Districts 120 and 130, which are both situated above the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer.

Dreher's order is in response to a delivery call made in January by the Surface Water Coalition, made up of seven Magic Valley canal companies and irrigation districts, which hold surface water rights senior in priority to most ground water rights on the ESPA. The order finds that the Coalition will likely suffer material injury predicted to be 133,400 acre-feet of water in 2005.

Under the order, holders of consumptive use ground water rights with a priority date of February 27, 1979 and later, are to be curtailed, if replacement water isn't provided in amounts equal to depletions to the Snake River flows between Blackfoot and Minidoka as determined by IDWR's latest ground water model.

Ground water districts and others have until the close of business on April 29, 2005 to file plans with IDWR to provide replacement water. Director Dreher will approve or disallow the plans by May 6, 2005.

Now that this order has been issued, Dreher and his staff will finish work on orders in response to other pending delivery calls in the Thousand Springs area. Dreher will re-issue an order in response to the delivery call made by Rangen Inc. in 2003, and issue orders in response to delivery calls from Billingsley Creek Ranch and Blue Lakes Trout filed in March. These orders will be issued in about two or three weeks.

It is important to note that the order issued late yesterday does not resolve the Surface Coalition's petition for administration of junior priority ground water rights in areas outside current Water Districts.

The order is available on the Department's website: www.idwr.idaho.gov

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